

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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TAGS: EIND, ETRD, TECH, FR, US

SUBJECT: FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR DIALOGUE WITH U.S. ON
INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND TECHNOLOGICAL INTERCHANGE

REF: TOKYO 9163

1. PHILIPPE ESPER, DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH, TOLD COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR JULY 5 THAT HIS MINISTRY WISHES TO DEVELOP CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH APPROPRIATE USG COUNTERPARTS ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND TECHNOLOGICAL INTERCHANGE. IN THIS CONTEXT TECHNOLOGICAL INTERCHANGE REFERS PRIMARILY TO COOPERATION BETWEEN U.S. AND FRENCH MANUFACTURERS IN FORM OF JOINT VENTURES OR CROSS-LICENSING ALONG LINES PROPOSED BY GOF TO JAPANESE IN ELECTRONICS FIELD (REFTEL).

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2. ESPER SAID GOF HAS ON-GOING BILATERAL DIALOGUE ON THESE MATTERS WITH SEVERAL OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES (HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED UK AND FRG) BUT CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT TO LAUNCH SIMILAR RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. WHICH IS SOURCE OF SO MUCH OF FREE WORLD HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND SUCH HEAVY INVESTOR IN FRANCE. RECURRING DIALOGUE WOULD, IN ESPER'S VIEW, FOSTER BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY MEASURES IN EACH COUNTRY (E.G. U.S. ACTION ON SPECIALTY STEEL) AND MIGHT LEAD TO BILATERAL ACCOMMODATIONS WHICH WOULD AVERT FRANCE/U.S. CONFRONTATION IN MULTILATERAL FORA SUCH AS MTN. MINISTRY HAS IN MIND HIGHLY INFORMAL INTERFACE WITH MEETINGS ON AD HOC BASIS AS EITHER PARTY SEES A NEED.

3. MINISTER OF INDUSTRY D'ORNANO HAS LAID TENTATIVE PLANS FOR VISIT TO U.S. AFTER NEW YEAR (PRESUMABLY AFTER IT BECOMES CLEAR WHO HIS U.S. OPPOSITE NUMBERS WILL BE). TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR VISIT, EXCHANGE DATA, AND IDENTIFY ISSUES, ESPER PROPOSES THAT USG SEND TEAM OF EXPERTS ON INDUSTRY POLICY AND TECHNOLOGICAL INTERCHANGE TO PARIS, PERHAPS IN NOVEMBER. WHILE THIS MEETING WOULD BE HIGHLY INFORMAL AND UNPUBLICIZED IT WOULD NEED TO BE WELL-PREPARED AND ESPER PROPOSES PREPARATORY DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBASSY IN SEPTEMBER IF USG IS RECEPTIVE TO IDEA.

4. IN OUR JUDGMENT FRENCH MAY HAVE GENUINE DESIRE TO EXPLORE UNDERBRUSH OF RESTRICTIVE INDUSTRIAL POLICY MEASURES (ESPECIALLY OURS), BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY THEIR MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO FIND WAYS OF INTRODUCING MORE U.S. HIGH TECHNOLOGY INTO FRENCH INDUSTRY AS MEANS OF BROADENING AND STRENGTHENING FRENCH EXPORT BASE. RELATED OBJECTIVE MAY BE TO PROVIDE MEANS FOR CLOSER GOF SURVEILLANCE OF, AND INFLUENCE OVER, INFLOW OF U.S. TECHNOLOGY VIA LICENSING ARRANGEMENTS AND JOINT VENTURES TO ENSURE THAT CERTAIN FRENCH CHOSEN INSTRUMENTS, SUCH AS THOMSON AND CII/HB, GET THEIR FAIR SHARE. THUS IF WE EMBARK ON THIS ENTERPRISE WE SHOULD BE ALERT NOT ONLY TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF DIVISIVE ISSUES BUT ALSO TO LIKELIHOOD THAT FRENCH WILL SEEK TO GAIN NET ADVANTAGE FROM DIALOGUE, ESPECIALLY IN TECHNOLOGICAL FIELD.
RUSH

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